

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell, December 25, 1891

JOURNAL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Dec. 25th, 1891. Dec. 24th, 1891 — Thursday.

Light came into my room in the morning while I was asleep and spoiled my whole day. Arranged Christmas presents for children of Arthur and Wm. McCurdy — Then took census of the children on Beinn Bhreagh — and neighbourhood. Mr. Campbell is living in the little red cottage with his wife and seven children! Too bad we can't accommodate them better. Besides the McCurdy children — I find there are 22 children all about here. With the assistance of some things found in attic — have been able to provide a little present for every one. A red letter day on the mountain — no less than six ewes came in today — including the 5 nipples sheep and two merinoes.

Sent cablegram to Genoa — and asked Mabel to cable Baddeck.

Went to bed after supper.

Dec. 25th, 1891 — Friday.

Headachy and good for nothing although light O. K. Slept off headache. Awakened about one o'clock. After dinner went to work labelling toys and books for children with Mr. McInnis — then sent a man around. Mr. McCurdy went into town early to his children. Received last night a box of Christmas tree decorations from Mrs. Hubbard. Lent them to Mr. McCurdy as I was not feeling bright — Mr. Ellis went up mountain for me this afternoon. Two new ewes. Everything progressing well. In afternoon Telegraph House called me by telephone — and reported cablegram from Genoa "Merry Christmas — 2 well — down good cheer." Jim wasn't sure about the "cheer" as it was spelled — he said — "ihere." Mr. McCurdy and I came to the conclusion that it meant "Brown Goode here."

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The house of John A. Macdonald — M. P. — was burned down this morning between three and four o'clock. He was away on a canvassing tour. His wife and children had a narrow escape — saved in their night clothes. One of the children quite overcome by smoke — but all right now. Called on Mrs. Macdonald at Telegraph House — and offered our sympathy — They have lost everything. Asked whether I could lend her anything from our house — but she replied that her friends in Baddeck had come forward to her assistance. Looked in at Mr. McCurdy's house and found the children having a glorious time.

Mr. McCurdy was dressed up as Santa Clause — and had a pipe in his mouth with a lighted candle in the bowl — was heading a procession — which marched round a glorious Christmas tree — lighted up beautifully. I could only look in for a few minutes as I was due at Judge Tremaine's at six o'clock. Dined at Judge Tremaine's — only the family present. The bride and bridegroom seemed to be quite wrapped up in one another. Had music after dinner. Mr. Pitman has a good voice — sings well — but manner affected. We could not find the Christmas cards — so could not send Christmas greetings to the children's Club — or Sewing girls. The Transcript contains a notice of the death of — Mr. Charles Scudder — no particulars.

The sail boat I made the journey to the Narrows in — with Miss Blatchford — has come to grief. During a storm recently it broke away from the pier — and drifted off. She landed some where on the shore — and pounded on the rocks — to and the stones she had for ballast — went through her bottom — and she now lies a wreck. Another of our boats — the one used by Mr. Ellis — also went adrift 3 and was much injured.

John McKillop crossed the bay in her — not knowing she was so leaky.

The water thawed the ice that filled the holes — and the water began to rush in. He rowed for life — and succeeded in reaching land just as she was sinking — water above the seats. A narrow escape — for water too cold to permit of immersion with safety.

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Exchanged telegrams with Washington. Miss McCurdy reports that Club is a great success. Tremaines have not attended — but she does not think the Khansin incident has had anything to do with it.

Noted at B. B. Dec. 25th, 1891. A.G.B. P. S. Have secured passage on the Nerra — leaving New York for Genoa on January 23rd. A.G.B.